



Youth Volunteers

Giving Both Ways

Voluntary Service

**VA Greater Los Angeles
Healthcare System
(310) 268-4350**

Summertime brings many pleasures of the season, and with it comes our youth volunteers. Many of us will be asked to supervise students who come to the VA to volunteer.

They are here for many reasons:

They need to meet their volunteer hours requirement.

They are looking for a mentor and an exciting career.

They are complying with parental wishes to do something positive over their summer.

We've all had experiences, even if we haven't been parents, of dealing with youngsters who can be charming and clueless in the same moment. Our teens show up in attire that is "fashionable", but inappropriate for healthcare. They bring various devices (iPod, Walkman, cell phones). They laugh, they sometimes don't hear you, or space out...why do we endure this invasion every year?

Because they will be YOU twenty years from now. If we are to survive the future of healthcare, we need to engage our youngsters NOW. And sometimes when we take them on, there are spectacular results: you get work done, they win scholarships for volunteering, and find other internships that ultimately benefit VA and our future.

Summer Youth Programs at GLA traditionally have a graduation ceremony with lots of awards and refreshments; ask Voluntary Service when for your site so your student can join the fun!

Voluntary Service sponsors lots of patient outings, and students frequently are allowed to come along, or participate in other fun events. Call and ask what's upcoming so your student can be included!

Youth Volunteers at GLA

Youth volunteers at GLA sign a contract that lays out their rights and responsibilities; their parents have to sign as well. Request a copy so that you know the basic guidelines.

Youth volunteers do best when supervised by someone who enjoys youngsters, and is a good referent model (someone they can identify with).

Youth volunteers excel when assigned to an exciting, active environment with lots of interaction, or at least involves movement; they need to burn up all that extra energy!

Youth of today crave stimulation; if you must assign them something routine, LET them wear their iPod or Walkman, they'll be a happier camper.

Consider letting your youth volunteer shadow a professional for day, in return for the hours of labor they are giving you. You may inspire the professional of tomorrow.

Their energy and creativity can be the gift you've been yearning for in the workplace.

Can you take a summer student? Got an idea for a student project? Or other questions? Ask your local Voluntary Service Site Manager, or check the GLA websites under Voluntary Service. We are here to help you make those connections, and get the help you need!

Special Thanks

Many of our Veterans Service Organizations sponsor students during the summer, and fund scholarships. Our VSOs know the value of our future, our children!